

## **Internally Displaced People and Relocation Sites in Eastern Burma**



**September 2002**

## WHY THIS REPORT?

The first major influx of Burmese refugees into Thailand was in 1984 when about 10,000 Karen refugees crossed into Tak Province. Since that time, civil war has dragged on throughout the Border States and Divisions, as the Burmese Army has battled against the ethnic armies who formerly controlled these areas. It has been a war which the Burmese Army has always been winning, albeit gradually, and new ethnic refugees have continued to enter Thailand as territory has been lost and homes have been overrun. Since a major military offensive during the dry season of 1997, the Burmese Army has gained tenuous access and control of the entire border, and the armed ethnic groups which have no cease-fire agreements with Rangoon, no longer control any significant territory.

With the ethnic resistance “defeated” and their territory “lost” it might have been expected that the refugee flow would stop, or at least decrease. But it has not. Refugees have continued to enter Thailand until the present day. The total border camp population, including the three Mon resettlement sites on the Burma side, now totals around 143,000 and the rate of arrival has been remarkably constant since UNHCR registered the refugees in 1999, averaging just under 900 per month for the last three years.<sup>1</sup>

From the stories told by new refugees and reports from the ethnic groups themselves, it has become clear that since 1996, the SPDC has been carrying out a major operation to secure control of this territory and to try to eliminate all remaining armed opposition. This has entailed the forced relocation of hundreds of thousands of civilians and the building of roads and military infrastructure for control purposes. The new refugees report fleeing the destruction of their villages, widespread forced labour and other human rights abuses.

It is the wish of the Royal Thai Government that no more refugees should enter Thailand and, although there is no formal plan, for some time there has been speculation about when and how those already in the country should be repatriated. Since the homes of many of the refugees have been destroyed and most people seem to agree that it would be premature to repatriate the refugees just now. Sooner or later though, the issue of repatriation will have to be addressed.

Before any refugee repatriation can take place it will be important to assess the conditions in the areas of return. Currently there is a shortage of reliable information. Relatively little research has been done into the nature of the relocation sites and although some estimates have been made of the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the border areas, these have generally been selective, and the situation has been constantly changing.

This report is the first attempt to make an up to date and comprehensive assessment of displacement in the border areas. The latest available data has been collated and as much information as possible has been gathered on the destruction of villages, the number of IDPs and the location and nature of the forced relocation sites.

The report does not draw any conclusions or make any recommendations. It does not comment on Royal Thai Government policy towards refugees from Burma nor offer any view on the political resolution of Burma’s complex ethnic problems, of which the repatriation of refugees will be one issue. It does, however, provide information pertinent to these issues.

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<sup>1</sup> These figures refer only to new refugees registered in the camps by UNHCR. They do not include many other refugees who do not enter the camps, but directly join the huge ‘illegal migrant’ population elsewhere in Thailand. Neither do they include Shan refugees who are not recognised by the Thai authorities but are also reported to have been arriving at an average rate of at least 1,000 per month for the last few years.

## 1. SUMMARY

Perhaps one million people living in the States and Divisions of Burma adjacent to the Thailand border have been displaced since 1996. At least 150,000 have fled as refugees or joined the huge "illegal" migrant population in Thailand.<sup>2</sup> Countless others have moved away to other villages and towns in Burma.

This report estimates that at least 632,978 displaced people are still currently either living in hiding (approximately 268,000 people), or in more than 176 forced relocation sites (approximately 365,000 people), in these border areas. It also identifies 2,536 'affected villages', which are known to have been destroyed (usually burnt) and/ or relocated *en masse*, or otherwise abandoned due to Burmese Army (*Tatmadaw*) activity.

### Burmese Border IDP Populations

State	IDPs in Hiding or Temporary Settlements	Number of Relocation Sites	IDPs in Relocation Sites	Affected Villages (destroyed, abandoned, or relocated)	Total IDP Population
Tenasserim	6,598	39	58,296	139	64,894
Mon State	40,000*	0	0	0	40,000
Karen State	96,469	88	99,765	719	196,234
Karenni State	50,000*	9	6,850	200*	56,850
Shan State	75,000*	40	200,000*	1,478	275,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>268,067</b>	<b>176**</b>	<b>364,911</b>	<b>2,536</b>	<b>632,978</b>

(\* Extrapolated from available data.) \*\* plus 4 Wa relocation areas

Every attempt has been made to cross-check the information provided. Unless otherwise stated, the information comes from unpublished fieldwork, conducted by local groups working with refugees and Burma's IDP population, mainly in the form of detailed maps and tables. Published sources are listed under References. However, the figures are necessarily based on incomplete information, collected under extremely difficult and changing conditions. The actual number of relocation sites and residents, and of IDPs in hiding, is probably significantly higher than that estimated here.

The forced relocation of thousands of villages is a product of counter-insurgency activities carried out by the *Tatmadaw*, in the context of a fifty-year civil war, characterised by chronic and severe human rights abuses directed against the civilian population (the major exception being the 1999-2002 Wa relocations). Relocation site residents are frequently subject to extortion, and forced to work on government infrastructure projects. Those who choose not to enter the relocation sites flee their villages, and live in hiding in the jungle. The *Tatmadaw* launches regular patrols, aimed at seeking out these IDPs, destroying their temporary shelters and rice supplies. People forced to move to relocation sites now constitute the largest sub-category of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the report outlines the types, populations and whereabouts of these relocation sites.

Three main types of relocation sites are identified:

a) Large '**Relocation Centres**', the residents of which have been forced to move from several outlying villages to one *Tatmadaw*-controlled location, often situated in the vicinity of infrastructure projects (e.g. car roads). Residents sometimes retain control over food stocks and access to farmland, although they are usually liable to various 'rice taxes', and subject to extensive forced labour. Many residents are unable to support themselves, and experience high rates of malnutrition, and numerous deaths have been reported. 'Relocation Centers' therefore often eventually dissolve - usually with the unofficial approval of local *Tatmadaw* and state officials. As these Centres are progressively abandoned, some residents return and attempt to

<sup>2</sup> 43,000 have entered the refugee camps along Thailand's western border, and at least 100,000 Shan refugees have crossed into the four northern provinces, joining the "illegal migrant" population.

rebuild their old villages; others adopt a life in hiding in the forest. In both cases, they are often subject to further bouts of forcible relocation.

b) Smaller '**Relocation Villages**' are pre-existing villages that have not been moved in their entirety, although outlying houses and satellite hamlets are forced to re-settle on confiscated land in the village centre. Like the 'Relocation Centres', many 'Relocation Villages' are fenced in, and more-or-less tightly controlled by the *Tatmadaw*. Residents of 'Relocation Villages' are also often called upon to do forced labour, but usually have some opportunity to tend their farms.

c) **Non State-controlled Relocation Sites**, including those under the command of the United Wa State Army (UWSA), an armed 'ceasefire group', which between 1999-2002 forcibly relocated at least 125,000 people from northern Shan State to its Southern Command area, 400 Km to the south.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Since the late-1960s, the civil war in Burma has been characterised by a counter-insurgency policy known as the 'Four Cuts' (*Pya Ley Pya* in Burmese). This strategy borrows elements from the US military's 'strategic hamlets' programme in Vietnam, from British practice in the Boer War and 1960s Malaya, and from the pacification of upper Burma following the Third Anglo-Burmese War.

The strategy is aimed at undermining insurgent organisations by targeting their civilian support base. There are *four* cuts, designed to undermine the rebels' supply of recruits, and to cut off their access to intelligence, food and finances (the undeclared fifth cut is said to be the insurgents' decapitation). The policy is aimed at turning 'black' rebel-held areas into 'brown' (contested, or free-fire) zones, and thence into 'white' zones, securely controlled by government forces. The idea is, as a Burmese proverb has it, 'to drain the sea, in order to kill the fish'.

Under the Four Cuts policy, *Tatmadaw* units issue orders to villages in 'brown' and 'black zones, to relocate to government-controlled areas, usually with little or no warning. The policy has at times amounted to a form of ethnic cleansing, as those villagers who do not move to relocation sites have experienced gross violations of their human rights (including murder) and vast areas of the Burmese countryside have been depopulated. Those who do move to the government's 'new villages' often face acute shortages of medicines and other necessities, and frequently have to work unpaid for the military.

Since the 1980s, the *Tatmadaw* has implemented the Four Cuts in combination with a massively increased nation-wide use of forced labour. In July 1998 an International Labour Organisation Commission of Inquiry reported that the government and military "treat the civilian population as an unlimited pool of unpaid forced labourers and servants at their disposal." The report went on to describe "a saga of untold misery and suffering, oppression and exploitation of large sections of the population." Those affected included large numbers of women, children and the elderly. Workers were usually not provided with food and rarely received any payment or medical treatment. Those perceived by their guards as "unwilling, slow, or unable to comply with a demand for forced labour" were subject to "physical abuse, beatings, torture, rape and murder." Across large parts of Burma, only those villagers able to pay off local *Tatmadaw* commanders could avoid extensive periods of forced labour and forced portering.<sup>3</sup> Those villagers unable to meet the on-going demands for forced labour and arbitrary taxation are often forced to leave their villages, and either join the IDP population in hiding in the jungle, or resettle elsewhere.

Burma's IDPs - who may also be victims of 'development induced displacement', having fled their homes as a result of the construction of dams and other infrastructure projects - have very limited access to even the most basic assistance or protection. Indeed, it is only relatively recently that they have begun to attract the attention of NGOs and other international observers.

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<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organisation, Commission of Enquiry (1998). Two months after publication of the ILO report, its findings were corroborated by the US Government Department of Labor.



**INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPs) flee the destruction of their homes, and are forced to live in hiding in the jungle.**  
**Duplaya District, Karen State - March-April 2002.**

**Photos: FBR**



### 3. IDP POPULATION ESTIMATES

Estimates of the number of IDPs in Burma - and criteria for inclusion – have varied, but after decades of displacement being used as an instrument of social control and counter-insurgency, the total is likely to number in the millions<sup>4</sup>. This report relates only to the States and Divisions of Burma immediately adjacent to Thailand, where reports from the ethnic groups have suggested a minimum of 600,000 IDPs for some time<sup>5</sup>. The estimate of at least 633,000 presented here is therefore consistent with earlier reports.

**Karen.** In 2000, the Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People (CIDKP) “estimated that there are around 300,000 internally displaced Karen people hiding in parts of the Irrawaddy Delta as well as in areas adjacent to the Burma-Thailand border in southeast Burma. These people can be divided into three categories: 1) those who are displaced for political reasons; 2) those who are displaced for economic reasons; and 3) those who are displaced as a direct result of military operations. Most of these people have been driven from their homes or have had them destroyed by Burmese troops, and are living in simple shelters or huts in hiding from the Burmese army. Many have no access to their fields to grow crops and are surviving by foraging in the jungle. They have little or no access to medicines. These people are already facing starvation and are suffering and dying from diseases such as malaria, pneumonia, dysentery, diarrhea and measles.”<sup>6</sup>

Based on data collected between 2000-02, by the CIDKP and several other organisations, the number of IDPs in hiding in Karen areas in 2002 is estimated at 103,067 people, broken down as follows:

#### Karen IDPs in Hiding or Temporary Settlements 2002

District	Families	Persons
Toungoo	1,641	9,662
Nyaunglabin	1,755	10,590
Thaton	1,899	10,580
Papun	6,617	37,007
Pa'an	2,488	13,630
Duplaya	2,727	15,000
Mergui-Tavoy ( <i>Tenasserim Division</i> )	1,278	6,598
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18,405</b>	<b>103,067</b>

There are 127 known relocation sites in these areas (i.e. not including Mon, Karenni or Shan States), containing an estimated 158,061 people. Therefore the IDP population in Karen State and Tenasserim Division combined may be 261,128 people.<sup>7</sup>

**Mon.** Mon sources estimate that there are about 40,000 IDPs in Mon State (not including repatriated refugees in the resettlement sites).

**Karenni.** Karenni sources estimate that there are some 50,000 IDPs in Karenni State, plus at least 6,850 people in relocation sites, making a total Karenni IDP population of about 56,850 people.

<sup>4</sup> For various estimates see Burma Ethnic Research group (1998), p 16.

<sup>5</sup> Burmese Border Consortium, *Relief Programme*, (August 2000)

<sup>6</sup> CIDKP *Work Plan* (2000-01).

<sup>7</sup> NB - some of these people are in hiding outside the official boundaries of Karen State.



Refugees cross the border only as a last resort. Fleeing forced village relocations, many people go into hiding and build makeshift shelters.

Families survive on the food they can find in the forest, constantly on the move.





**Shan.** Based on two recent research projects, it is estimated that, since 1999, 125,000-plus people have been relocated from northern to southern Shan State, by the Wa authorities. Furthermore, some 75,000 people are currently residing in relocation sites in central Shan State, with a roughly equal number of people living in hiding or otherwise displaced in the state. This makes an IDP population in Shan State of some 275,000 people.<sup>8</sup>

Based on these estimates (some of which are extrapolations from incomplete data), there are therefore probably at least 632,978 (633,000) displaced people either living in hiding or in forced relocation sites in areas adjacent to the Burma-Thailand border:

### **Burma Border IDP Populations 2002**

<b>State</b>	<b>IDPs in Hiding or Temporary Settlements</b>	<b>IDPs in Relocation Sites</b>	<b>Total IDPs</b>
Tenasserim Division	6,598	58,296	64,894
Mon State	40,000*	None <sup>9</sup>	40,000
Karen State	96,469	99,765	196,234
Karenni State	50,000*	6,850	56,850
Shan State (Central)	75,000*	75,000*	150,000
Shan State (South)	(Unknown) <sup>10</sup>	125,000	125,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>268,067</b>	<b>364,911</b>	<b>632,978</b>

(\* Extrapolated from available data.)

These figures are likely to be quite conservative estimates, and do not include the large number of IDPs who have re-settled in relatively unaffected villages and towns in Burma. Also excluded are migrants and refugees in other countries (mostly Thailand). There are also large numbers of IDPs in other parts of Burma which are beyond the scope of this report.

<sup>8</sup> Between 1996-98, 1,478 villages were relocated in 8 townships across central and southern Shan State. At least 100,000 people fled to Thailand, 100,000 moved to relocation sites and 100,000 fled into hiding in the jungle or elsewhere in Shan State: SHRF (1998). Since 1998, many more people have left for Thailand, somewhat reducing the IDP population. See also Amnesty International (July 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Mon sources report a failed SPDC campaign to forcibly relocate outlying villages in northern Ye Township (Mon State) in 2001. NB - some Karen relocation sites (in western Thaton and Duplaya Districts) are within the official boundaries of Mon State.

<sup>10</sup> As many as 48,000 people have been displaced by the Wa relocations, of whom several thousand have fled to Thailand.

#### 4. DEFINITION AND TYPES OF RELOCATION SITES

Forcibly relocated people constitute a sub-set of internally displaced persons, as defined in the 1998 *UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. They have been “obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence.”<sup>11</sup> However, rather than hiding in the jungle, or seeking refuge by crossing an international boundary, these people have complied with relocation orders.

The definition of a forced relocation site used in this report is a settlement where residence is a product of coercion rather than free choice. This definition includes sites where residents are able to leave the settlement for periods of time, whether officially or without permission. It also includes the Wa relocation sites in southern Shan State.<sup>12</sup>

Forced relocation sites are found across central and southern Shan State, Karenni, Karen and Mon States and Tenasserim Division adjacent to the Thai border, and also in parts of central Burma, Arakan and Chin States. Relocation orders are often issued when new *Tatmadaw* units arrive in areas where insurgents are active. Numerous incidents of murder - and in Shan State in particular, rape<sup>13</sup> - have been recorded in the context of forced relocation campaigns. Those who choose not to enter the relocation sites must flee their villages, and live in hiding in the jungle.<sup>14</sup> The *Tatmadaw* launches regular patrols, aimed at seeking out these non-compliant IDPs, and destroying their temporary shelters and rice supplies. Massacres have been reported on many occasions.<sup>15</sup>

As described below, types of relocation site in Burma vary. At one end of the spectrum are specially created sites, where the populations of a dozen or more villages are gathered behind fences, often under armed guard; at the other are existing villages, the outlying sections (or individual houses) of which are relocated to the village centre. In all cases, the primary objective is the control of populations, in order to extract labour and other resources, and to deny villagers contact with insurgent groups.

The following descriptions represent ‘ideal types’. In practice, patterns of forced relocation, and the existence of and conditions in particular sites, shift over time.

**a) Relocation Centres.** These are large settlements, usually based around pre-existing villages (and sometimes - for example in Shan State - towns). As such, they are better documented than Type *b* or *c* sites (below). They are often situated along the side of car roads, or in the vicinity of other infrastructure projects. ‘Relocation Centres’ are situated in areas firmly controlled by government forces (‘white areas’), with *Tatmadaw* bases nearby (and sometimes actually on-site). As well as any original inhabitants of the area - who often live in their old houses, adjacent to the relocation site proper - the residents of ‘Relocation Centres’ may include IDPs from up to a dozen or more outlying villages, who have been forced to move down from the hills to the government-controlled lowlands. In most cases, their original houses will have been dismantled by residents prior to their relocation, and/ or destroyed by the *Tatmadaw* (fruit trees and other crops are also routinely destroyed, and property looted). Villagers are not generally told where in the ‘Relocation Centres’ to settle, merely ordered to move within a set period of time. New

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<sup>11</sup> *The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, ‘Introduction’ (Point 2).

<sup>12</sup> The UN Committee responsible for monitoring the 1966 Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, lists various international agreements banning ‘forced evictions’. It defines “the term ‘forced evictions’ ... as the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection” (General Comment No. 7 [1991] *The Right to Adequate Housing* [Article 11.1]).

<sup>13</sup> See Shan Human Rights Foundation and Shan Women’s Action Network (2002).

<sup>14</sup> For details of two recent forced relocation campaigns, in northern Karen State and Tenasserim Division, see Karen Human Rights Group (October & December 2001).

<sup>15</sup> For example, on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2002 (one week before the SPDC released Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest) 12 villagers were massacred at Ta Ri Tae Khi, about 2 hours walk south of Htee Law Bleh village, in Kya-In Township (Duplaya District, southern Karen State). Troops from *Tatmadaw* Infantry Battalion 78, led by Captain Win Zaw Oo, surrounded the IDPs’ temporary shelter, and opened fire. Of the 12 killed, 8 were women, and 7 were under-16 (including a two-year-old and an unborn baby). Similarly, following an engagement with Karen insurgent forces, on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2002 troops from Light Infantry Battalion No. 559 reportedly killed ten Karen villagers in Mukwa village in Mergui Township (Tenasserim Division).

arrivals in 'Relocation Centres' are usually given no state assistance, and must attempt to construct houses and re-build their lives with very limited material resources.

The Type a relocation sites for which the best data is currently available are those in Toungoo District, in the mountainous far north of Karen State. Due to the terrain, these are likely to be among the smaller 'Relocation Centres'. The populations at these 11 sites vary between 422 and 4,811 people, relocated from between 3 and 12 villages in the east of the district (of 123 villages abandoned or destroyed in the district, residents of 69 are known to have moved to relocation sites).

Conditions in these large 'Relocation Centres' vary. Regular paid work is rarely available. Access to water varies, but the quality is often very poor. Numerous credible reports indicate that the provision of schools, clinics and other services are often minimal or non-existent. At best, already destitute IDPs are likely to be charged for any medicines available. Where government schools are available, there are usually fees to pay, and ethnic minority children have no opportunity to study their own, indigenous languages.

In many 'Relocation Centres', residents are required to hand over all remaining rice stocks to the local authorities (i.e. the *Tatmadaw*), which then ration - or sometimes sell - these back to the villagers.<sup>16</sup> Even in sites where residents retain control over their own food stocks, these are likely to be insufficient for subsistence, for three inter-related reasons: 1. The destruction and looting of villagers' rice supplies by the *Tatmadaw* (with the pretext that these may find their way to the insurgents) is itself a major factor in forcing people into relocation sites; 2. Villagers can usually only carry a limited amount of rice with them to the relocation sites; 3. Residence in relocation sites is a product of coercion. Although in many cases forcibly relocated IDPs are issued with (or can buy) passes allowing them to re-visit their original farms, the often considerable distances to their old homes, combined with the limited amount of time allowed (they are often barred from staying away overnight) mean that the amount of rice and other crops harvested is usually much lower than that grown before relocation.

People living in 'Relocation Centres' are usually liable to various 'rice taxes'. They are also often subject to extensive bouts of forced labour for the *Tatmadaw*, on state-sponsored projects (such as roads), leaving families with little time and human resources to devote to their own survival. In some cases, the amount of forced labour demanded is so great as to occupy entire families full-time. The only alternative is to pay others to go on their behalf. Residents of some relocation sites are allocated plots to farm, but the quality of the land is often very poor, and a large proportion of any crops produced is liable to be confiscated.<sup>17</sup> Although firm data is not available, anecdotal evidence indicates the existence of chronic malnutrition in many 'Relocation Centres'. In the Karenni and Shan State relocation sites in the late 1990s in particular, very large numbers of people are reported to have died of treatable diseases.

The lack of food and extremely difficult conditions in 'Relocation Centres' eventually drive large numbers of residents to flee. In many cases (e.g. parts of Karenni State in 1999-2002), authorities turn a 'blind eye' to these departures, and IDPs are able to return to - and attempt to re-build - their old villages. In others (such as Tenasserim Division in the same period), departed 'Relocation Centre' residents must join the IDP population hiding in the jungle, among whom are likely to be fellow-villagers, who fled following the original relocation orders and chose to take their chances in the hills. The 'lucky' few make it to the uncertain refuge of neighboring Thailand. Those who remain in hiding or attempt to re-build their villages are often subsequently subject to further rounds of forcible relocation, when *Tatmadaw* officers (often newly rotated into the area) initiate a renewed 'Four Cuts' programme.

Sometimes patterns of relocation are even more complex. For example, in recent months, people from relocation sites in Papun, Toungoo and Thaton Districts (Karen State) have been allowed to go back to their villages for weeks at a time. However, they must still periodically return to the relocation sites for a few days or weeks (in such cases, these sites are included as Type a Relocation Centres in this report).

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<sup>16</sup> This is reportedly the case in relocation sites in northern Tenasserim Division and across much of northern Karen State.

<sup>17</sup> NCGUB (2000).



## RELOCATION SITES

Burma-Thailand Border 2002

State	Relocation Sites
Tenasserim	39
Mon	0
Karen	88
Karenni	9
Shan	40*
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>
*[plus Wa Relocation Zones]	

State	Populations of Relocation Sites
Tenasserim	58,296
Karen	99,765
Karenni	6,850
Shan	200,000*
<b>Total</b>	<b>364,911</b>
*[inc. Wa Relocation Zones]	

● Relocation Site (Karen)

● Relocation Site (Karenni)

● Relocation Site (Shan)

○ Relocation Zone (Wa)

The fact that many thousands of relocation site residents 'choose' the life of an IDP in hiding, under conditions of minimal food and personal security, and subject to the full catalogue of *Tatmadaw* human rights abuses, is testimony to the poor conditions in many 'Relocation Centres'. However, conditions at some sites seem to be better than others. Particularly in the longer-established settlements, there are functioning schools (to which however, not all residents can afford to send their children), some paid work is available, and - as in any community - people attempt to re-establish their lives. In such cases, residence is often no longer (or not entirely) a product of coercion, and it is debatable whether such 'new villages' should still be considered relocation sites. It is also worth noting that the state sometimes provides some rice to new arrivals in 'Relocation Centres' (although this has often been looted from their own or others' granaries), and that some support has also been distributed in relocation sites by church and other social welfare organisations working 'inside' Burma.

The topic of assistance to IDPs in relocation sites is very sensitive. Groups involved in such activities may be accused of abetting the state's draconian forced relocation programme, and such assistance may be very difficult to monitor. Furthermore, relief workers in the border areas must keep a very low profile, as any public exposure of their work may endanger those concerned, and compromise their continued access to vulnerable populations.

**b) Relocation Villages.** These are pre-existing settlements, which have not been relocated in their entirety, but where outlying houses and satellite hamlets have been forced to move into the village centre. As such, they might also be described as 'consolidated villages'. Across large swathes of rural Burma (e.g. almost the whole of Tenasserim Division) they are the only villages remaining. However, there seem to be few, if any, of these Type *b* relocation sites in Shan State.

'Relocation Villages' are smaller than Type *a* 'Relocation Centres', and more difficult to document and map. Therefore there are probably significantly more 'Relocation Villages' in the border areas than indicated in this report. They may be situated in areas firmly controlled by government forces, with *Tatmadaw* bases nearby, but are sometimes also found in 'brown' areas, where insurgent forces have some operational capacity. The residents of 'Relocation Villages' (who may include IDPs who have arrived from other, previously relocated villages) are in general subject to less strict control than those of the big 'Relocation Centres'. Outlying houses - and sometimes, in the case of larger villages, whole sections on the edge of the 'Relocation Village' - are forced to move into the village centre, and to rebuild their houses on land previously owned by other villagers. As is the case when land is confiscated from the original inhabitants of Type *a* 'Relocation Centres', no compensation is given to those affected. Overcrowding in the centres of 'Relocation Villages' creates unsanitary conditions, and often leads to a greater prevalence of communicable diseases.

As are most 'Relocation Centres', 'Relocation Villages' are often fenced in, entry and exit being more-or-less tightly controlled by the *Tatmadaw*. Residents of 'Relocation Villages' are also often called upon to do forced labour. However, they usually have some opportunity to tend their farms (although with various restrictions), as these are generally closer to home than those belonging to Type *a* residents.

Some 'Relocation Villages' have schools, but many do not. In some areas, 'Relocation Villages' are allowed to remain *is situ* (i.e. not forced to move to Type *a* 'Relocation Centres') if they guarantee not to have contact with insurgent forces. The *Tatmadaw* frequently warns such 'peace villages' (*Nyein Chan Ye* in Burmese) that, if any fighting should occur in the area, they will be forced to move.

**c) Non State-controlled Relocation Sites.** In most parts of Burma, the primary agent of displacement is the *Tatmadaw*. However, non-state armed groups have also been responsible for forcible relocation and the creation of IDPs, the most prominent in recent years being the United Wa State Army (UWSA).<sup>18</sup>

Between 1999-2002, at least 125,000 Wa and other (Lahu, Haw Chinese etc.) villagers were relocated from 'Wa Special Region 2' in the north of Shan State, to the UWSA's Southern Command area, opposite Thailand's Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai provinces. Between 5-10,000 of these people reportedly died of treatable conditions. Informants agree that relocated villagers received some support from the UWSA, in the form of rice and cash. However, they disagree as to the fate of the original - mostly Shan and Lahu - inhabitants of sites in the south, to which villagers from the north were moved. As many as 48,000 of these people have been displaced or otherwise affected by the new arrivals. There is also disagreement regarding the Wa authorities' motive in relocating such large numbers of people, as well as those of the SPDC and (state and private) Chinese interests.<sup>19</sup>

Most 'source' villages lacked sufficient rice farming land, were located in deforested areas, and were often very poor and dependent on opium cultivation. Therefore, many of those relocated were at first not displeased to move to better land in the south. However, few people were given a choice in the matter, and since 1999 most of those relocated have been forced to move - sometimes at gunpoint. Relocatees are mostly moved in whole villages, which probably helps to maintain existing community structures. However, villagers are given between zero and a few weeks advance notice, and - while the majority were transported at least part-way in trucks - some have had to walk all the way (400 Km) to the Southern Command area.

The lack of consultation with 'source' or 'host' communities reflects the UWSA's 'top-down' approach to policy and action. This command style - and associated distrust of autonomous community organisations - owes much to Burmese political culture, to the under-developed nature of Wa social structures, and to ideas of the 'leading role of the party' inherited from the Communist Party of Burma (of which the UWSA was an element, until 1989).

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<sup>18</sup> The following account is derived from *Displacement and Development in the Southern Wa Sub-state*, a report by Ashley South (January 2002). See also Lahu National Development Organisation, *Unsettling Moves: The Wa Forced Resettlement Programme in Eastern Shan State* (April 2002) and Amnesty International (July 2002).

<sup>19</sup> One reason given for the on-going relocations is to break villagers' dependency on opium cultivation, and some Wa leaders consider the transmigration program to be a positive contribution to the development of their people, providing desperately poor villagers with new lands and new socio-economic opportunities. However, the programme clearly contravenes many of the UN's 1998 *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*.

## 5. LOCATIONS OF RELOCATION SITES AND AFFECTED VILLAGES

The following information is derived from research conducted between 1996-2002. Relocation sites include Types *a* & *b* and, in the case of southern Shan State, Type *c* (outlined above). Affected villages are those which are known to have been destroyed by, or abandoned because of, *Tatmadaw* activity, and also villages known to have been relocated *en masse*. Villages which have been destroyed, abandoned or relocated in the past, but which have since been resettled, are not included.

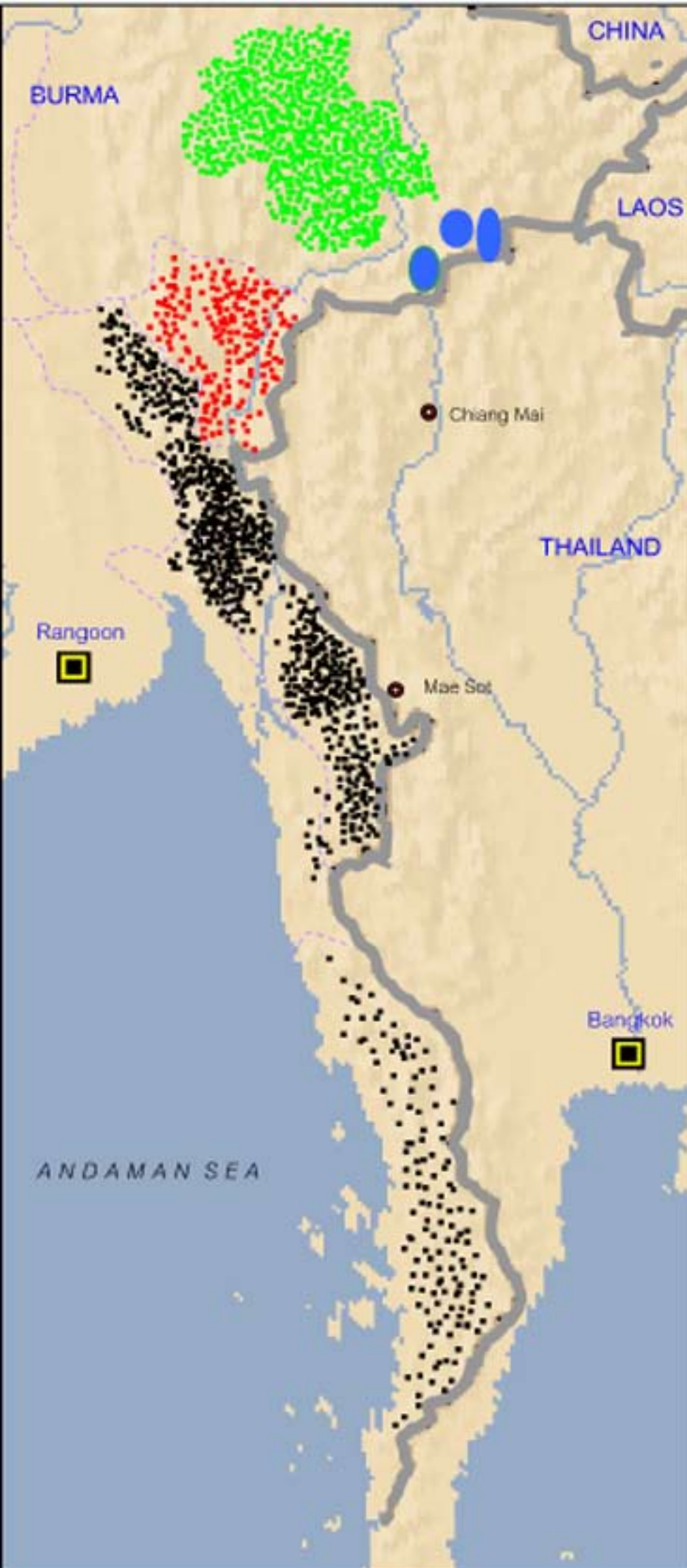
Due to problems of access, these figures are likely to under-represent the number and populations of relocation sites, and of affected villages, in the selected areas. However, some relocation site residents may since have fled to Thailand, returned home or - more probably - adopted a life in hiding in the forest.

### Relocation Sites and Affected Villages in Burma-Thailand Border Areas 2002

State (Division)	Number of Relocation Sites	Population of Relocation Sites	Affected Villages (destroyed/ abandoned/ relocated)
<b>Tenasserim Division</b>	39	58,296	139
<b>Karen State (sub-total)</b>	88	99,765*	719
Toungoo District	11	15,565	123
Nyaunglabin District	18	18,000*	113
Thaton District	28	28,000*	72
Papun District	14	12,200	178
Pa'an District	8	12,000	125
Duplaya District	9	14,000*	108
<b>Karenni State</b>	9	6,850	200*
<b>Shan State</b>	40 (plus 4 Wa Relocation Zones)	200,000* <sup>20</sup>	1,478
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>364,911</b>	<b>2,536</b>

(\* Extrapolated from available data.)

<sup>20</sup> Approximately 75,000 people in state relocation sites, plus at least 125,000 'Wa relocatees': South (2002) & LNDO (2002).



## Affected Villages Burma-Thailand Border (1996-2002 estimate)

State	Affected Villages	Color
Tenasserim	139	■
Karen	719	■
Toungoo	123	
Nyaunglabin	113	
Thaton	72	
Papun	178	
Pa'an	125	
Duplaya	108	
Karenni	200	■
Shan	1,478	■
Shan, Akha, Lahu		■

**TOTAL 2536 villages**

An estimated 1,000,000 people have been displaced in the border states since 1996.

At least 268,000 internally displaced people are currently living in hiding. At least 365,000 people are currently resident in more than 176 forced relocation sites.

43,000 people have arrived in refugee camps along the border since 1996. At least 100,000 Shan refugees have arrived in Thailand, joining the already very large 'illegal migrant' population.



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